WE CLAIM AS OUR INVENTION:

1. An arrangement for offering a message to a terminal device, comprising:

a data bank in which information identifying respective playback capabilities of a plurality of terminal devices is stored;

at least one message source which provides at least one message having a playback requirement associated therewith; and

a server adapted for communication with a selected one of said terminal devices, said server having access to said information stored in said data bank and being connectable to said message source to receive said at least one message therefrom, said server determining from said information in said data bank whether said selected one of said terminal devices has playback capability matched to the playback requirement of said message and, if so, said server transmitting said message via said communication link.

2. An arrangement as claimed in claim 1 comprising a plurality of message sources respectively generating messages with different playback requirements, and wherein said server is adapted, via a further communication link and a switch, to receive said messages from said plurality of message sources.

3. An arrangement as claimed in claim 1 wherein said service data source comprises said message source.

4. An arrangement as claimed in claim 3 comprising a plurality of service data sources, each comprising a message source, and a switch for selectively connecting one of said service data sources at a time to said server for supplying service data and a message from said one of said service data sources to said server.

5. An arrangement as claimed in claim 4 comprising a memory in which all of the service data sources in said plurality of service data sources are stored.

6. An arrangement as claimed in claim 4 comprising a memory in which said service data source is stored.

7. An arrangement as claimed in claim 1 wherein said message source generates said message as an arbitrarily formatted data file, and wherein said information stored in said data bank includes identification of respective data file formats processible by the respective terminal devices, and wherein said server comprises a conversion unit for, dependent on said information from said data bank, converting said data file format of said message into the data file format processible by said selected one of said terminal devices.

8. An arrangement as claimed in claim 1 wherein said data bank, said at least one service data source and said server are disposed together in a service center.

9. A service data and message communication system comprising:

a plurality of terminal devices having respectively different playback capabilities;

a data bank in which information identifying the respective playback capabilities of said terminal devices is stored;

at least one service data source;

at least one message source which generates at least one message having a playback requirement; and

a server adapted to produce a communication link to a selected one of said terminal devices, said server having access to said service data from said service data source and having access to said information stored in said data bank, and being connectable to said message source to receive said at least one message therefrom, said server determining from said information in said data bank whether said selected one of said terminal devices has playback capability matched to the playback requirement of said message and, if so, said server transmitting said message together with said service data via said communication link.

10. A system as claimed in claim 9 comprising a plurality of message sources respectively generating messages with different playback requirements, and wherein said server is adapted, via a further communication link and a switch, to receive said messages from said plurality of message sources.

11. A system as claimed in claim 9 wherein said service data source comprises said message source.

12. A system as claimed in claim 9 comprising a plurality of service data sources, each comprising a message source, and a switch for selectively connecting one of said service data sources at a time to said server for supplying service data and a message from said one of said service data sources to said server.

13. A system as claimed in claim 12 comprising a memory in which all of the service data sources in said plurality of service data sources are stored.

14. A system as claimed in claim 9 comprising a memory in which said service data source is stored.

15. A system as claimed in claim 9 wherein said message source generates said message as an arbitrarily formatted data file, and wherein said information stored in said data bank includes identification of respective data file formats processible by the respective terminal devices, and wherein said server comprises a conversion unit for, dependent on said information from said data bank, converting said data file format of said message into the data file format processible by said selected one of said terminal devices.

16. A system as claimed in claim 9 wherein said data bank, said at least one service data source and said server are disposed together in a service center.

17. A system as claimed in claim 9 wherein one of said terminal devices is a postage meter machine, and wherein said data bank stores playback capability information for said postage meter machine indicating said postage meter machine can process image data files and text data files.

18. A system as claimed in claim 9 wherein one of said terminal devices is a postal scale, and wherein said data bank stores playback capability information for said postal scale indicating said postal scale can process running text data files.

19. A system as claimed in claim 9 wherein one of said terminal devices is a personal computer, and wherein said data bank stores playback capability information for said personal computer indicating said personal computer can process at least one of sound data files and vide data files.

20. A method for offering a message when loading service data to a terminal device, comprising the steps of:

storing information identifying respective playback capabilities for a plurality of terminal devices;

storing service data occasionally needed by at least one of said terminal devices;

generating at least one message at a message source, said message having a playback requirement associated therewith;

when a need for said service data by said at least one of said terminal devices occurs, establishing a communication link between a server and said one

of said terminal devices and providing said server with access to said service data and said information stored in said data bank and said message;

in said server, determining whether said playback requirement of said message is matched to said playback capability of said one of said terminal devices, using said information stored in said data bank and, if so, transmitting said service data and said message to said one of said terminal devices via said communication link.

21. A method as claimed in claim 20 wherein the step of storing information in said data bank includes storing information in said data bank respectively identifying data file formats which are processible by the respective terminal devices, and wherein the step of generating a message comprises generating a message with an arbitrary data file format, and comprising the step of converting the data file format of said message to match the data file format processible by said selected one of said terminal devices.

22. A method as claimed in claim 20 comprising selecting said one of said terminal devices dependent on the playback capability necessary for matching the playback requirement of said message.

23. A method as claimed in claim 20 comprising playing back said message at said selected one of said terminal devices during communication via said communication link.

24. A method as claimed in claim 20 comprising playing back said message at said selected one of said terminal devices after communication via said communication link.

25. A method as claimed in claim 20 wherein said selected one of said terminal devices has a visual display, and comprising the step of playing back said message at said selected one of said terminal devices on said display.